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Child Welfare League
of America
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child welfare

April 1955

*Symposium: Developing Generic
and Specific Knowledge
through the Study of Children's
Services*

*Young Workers and their
Vocational Needs*

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CHILD WELFARE

JOURNAL OF THE CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA, INC.

HENRIETTA L. GORDON, Editor

CHILD WELFARE is a forum for discussion in print of child welfare problems and the programs and skills needed to solve them. Endorsement does not necessarily go with the printing of opinions expressed over a signature.

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SYMPORIUM: DEVELOPING GENERIC AND SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE THROUGH THE STUDY OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Because of the interest in the preparation of professional staff for practice, Dr. Schulze's article is being used as a basis for this symposium. The two articles which follow it open the discussion. In the next several issues of *CHILD WELFARE*, faculty members from other schools of social work will present their points of view.

PLACEMENT AS SOCIAL TREATMENT*

Susanne Schulze, Ph.D.

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IN THE FALL of 1948 the writer, whose training and experience both in the field and in teaching in this country and abroad had mainly been in child welfare, joined the Social Service Administration faculty to guide the fieldwork program of second-year students in child welfare placements. At the same time, she took over the teaching of the two specialized courses in the treatment sequence: "Children in Foster Homes" and "Children in Institutions," which had been part of the curriculum for many years, each as a one-credit course.

The latter responsibility was assumed with the understanding that, in line with the new casework which had gradually developed at the University,¹ these specialized courses in child welfare would eventually have to pass review in order to decide whether they were still making a valid contribution to the students' learning or should be discontinued as an anachronism in an otherwise generic program.

* Reprinted from *S.S.A. Newsletter*, August, 1954, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois. Vol. 2, No. 3.

¹ See Helen Harris Perlman, "Content in Basic Social Casework," *Social Service Review*, March, 1947, and "Generic Aspects of Specific Casework Settings," *ibid.*, September, 1949; and Charlotte Towle, "Selection and Arrangement of Case Material for Orderly Progression of Learning," *Social Service Review*, March, 1953.

In the fall of 1950 the whole faculty working full time for a month on curriculum and in three separate workshops (Social Casework, Organization and Administration of the Welfare Services, and Social Research), as well as in several plenary sessions, gave the S.S.A. curriculum its "new look."² At this time the two specialized courses in child welfare underwent thorough scrutiny in the casework workshop.

These deliberations, involving the total casework faculty and finally leading to the "birth" of a new course, "Placement as Social Treatment."

How the Course Evolved

To interpret the rationale for the retaining of a specialized course in an otherwise generic curriculum the writer has chosen to give the reader, on the basis of the workshop minutes, an account of the metamorphosis of the old courses into the new.

Following the elaboration by the instructor of the outlines for the two old courses which had been studied by the workshop participants in advance, discussion centered first on certain elements of repetition in them. Such repetition had been necessary for the orientation of those students who selected only one of the courses, but obviously it was a waste of time for those who attended both. This, then, could be avoided by merging the two courses into one. Also a number of other duplications were pointed out that related to pertinent content now taught in

² See Helen R. Wright, "S.S.A. Today," *S.S.A. Alumni Newsletter*, December, 1953.

other courses such as Casework V, Relationship of Setting to Casework Practice, "Public Welfare II" in which half the time of this course was given over to the public care of children; and "Policies and Problems in Administration of Welfare Programs: Child Welfare."

Another even more serious shortcoming in offering separate foster home care and institutional care courses was seen in the difficulties which arose in helping students toward the all-important understanding of characteristics, assets, and liabilities in either form of care in order that they might be enabled to put them to differential use and avoid an overidentification with either service. It was recognized that teaching about these two major placement resources in one course rather than in two separate ones would lead to an enrichment. The impact of institutional group life would stand out more boldly through comparing and contrasting it with foster home care and vice versa.

The following ideas in relation to rationale, purpose, and content of the course were advanced by various workshop members:

1. *Major emphasis should be placed on teaching the value of a new and corrective life-experience as treatment.* Thus it is the new living situation in either foster home or institution which, in the cases under consideration, should represent the major element in treatment rather than the caseworker's direct work with the child or the parents. The student would be led toward a deeper appreciation of what may happen therapeutically in a carefully planned environment in an institution or foster home where pressures are at a minimum and where responses of the adult to the child are geared toward strengthening the latter's capacity to use relationships with foster-parents, houseparents, and other children constructively.

All that goes into providing such an environment—physical setting, human relationships, program, "social climate"—and the way it is determined by these various factors, as well as by the philosophy of board and administration, are given consideration.

Implied here is also the stress put on learn-

ing the previously mentioned differential use of placement resources in accordance with the needs and capacities of the parents and the child who is considered for or is already in placement. Placement records can frequently show more dramatically and convincingly than can records from other settings the use of the living situation for treatment purposes. That is, where sound placement affords the child the nurture necessary for his growth, he will often respond immediately, in contrast to a much slower movement in many of those family casework situations in which the parents must be helped to modify their attitudes and responses and where adverse social and economic situations cannot be changed at all.

2. *The study of homefinding records will also contribute significantly to the student's learning, as it gives him an opportunity to study the interplay of normal family life,* which the study of families under agency care does not afford him as readily. Thus he will learn to differentiate between the family which can meet a child's need from the one which cannot do so. Hopefully, in this way, stereotypes about the perfect family will be broken down, and the student will be helped to distinguish between the kinds of problems in relationships which are within the range of normality and those which indicate an unsuitable home. All of this, then, should lead to a deepened insight into family life.

3. *The student needs to learn to differentiate the foster parent and the houseparent in the institution from a client* and should be helped to see that accordingly his method of investigation of a foster home will have to vary from the process of seeking an understanding of the client and his problems in an intake situation. That is, the student undertaking a foster home study needs an acute awareness that the foster parent comes to the agency primarily to offer a service, as well as sometimes to solve a problem, whereas the client is motivated to come out of his need for a service. This differential will also have import for the supervision of foster parents. Here, again, the approach will have to vary from that used in treatment of a client, al-

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though all that the student has learned about diagnosis, study, and the maintenance of a constructive helping relationship will have to be mobilized and adapted for use in the study of foster homes and the supervision of foster parents. This adaptation resembles the way in which casework knowledge and understanding are used in the supervision of an untrained but frequently experienced staff worker.

Generic Aspects

As these points were reviewed, it was noted by some workshop members that here we were dealing with generic principles and practices rather than with things specific to the child welfare field and thus that all social caseworkers might well profit by having their learning in the basic sequence deepened and widened in this way for use in any setting. This would apply particularly to social caseworkers in those agencies whose programs include placement of adult clients in foster homes and institutions under the care of semiprofessional staff members, such as in mental hospitals, sanitaria, convalescent homes, and institutions for the chronically ill.

The committee also gave much thought as to whether the stage of development of a particular field—in this instance, the child welfare field—might justify the offering of a specialized course. There was general recognition of the contribution that specialized courses have made previously to medical social work, family, and psychiatric casework. However, one danger was pointed out, namely, that to give an apparently specialized course in one field might evoke a clamor for other specialized courses in the care of the aged, the handicapped, etc. Thus the generic content of our curriculum might be jeopardized if we yielded to the temptation to meet the needs of those in fields where practice has lagged. These needs should rather be met in institutes during the Summer Quarter.

What other rationale, then, was the query of the workshop group, do we have for setting up a new course focusing on the *child* in placement? First and most important, much of what students learn about the child in

such a course is generic, as one's learning about the child is applicable to work with clients of all ages. Furthermore, it elaborates and puts to use knowledge gained from the psychiatric information courses, notably "Development of Personality," "Behavior Disorders of Children," and even "Psychopathology."

Furthermore, the child frequently shows the therapeutic influence of a new and corrective living experience rather dramatically because of his sensitivity to people, his willingness to trust again, his hope for the future, his lack of prejudices, and his elastic ability to change. Essential material on a child's nurture for growth and of cases giving the students a firsthand feeling for and understanding of the child's needs and the impact of his responses in the various placement situations can be introduced in such a course. These pertain mainly to the child's day-by-day living and his self-expression through play and creative activities. This material is not given in the two courses on development of personality, is given only to a limited degree in the other courses in the casework sequence, and often is not available in the field to all students.

Last, but not least, social work as a humanitarian profession conceives it as not only valid but mandatory to put prevention first.

These considerations, then, led to the proposal that the generic emphasis of the new course, while essentially focused on the child and his treatment through a new and corrective living experience, could be further enhanced by the instructor's using every possible opportunity to point out the application of principles to other placement situations, that is, the meaning of separation and the handling of reactions to it, the significance of careful diagnosis of the needs and capacities of the individual in relation to the demands of the new living situation, and the import of thoughtful preparation of the child for the new experience on his subsequent adjustment.

In order to alert students to such comparative thinking, it was thought advisable

to state the generic purpose and content of the course in the introductory session as well as the reason for the focus on children. Thus, the students from the beginning should understand that one age group and field is being studied to formulate principles for use with other age groups and settings where treatment is also mainly given through a new and corrective living experience.

Furthermore, through course assignments students might be given an opportunity to apply principles learned in relation to child-placement situations elsewhere—for instance, to the placement of the aged, of the mental patient, etc.

As the instructor of this course must draw heavily on other courses in the curriculum, this course was seen as one that would afford the student an opportunity to learn thoroughly through repetition and drill. The course was to be required for all students in child welfare field placements and open to all students in other specializations. Students in

child guidance clinics were specially urged to register for it.

As the attendance at an elective noncredit course such as this one leads to the crowding of an already heavy program for most students, in order to make it at all possible for them to register for it, as many of them desire to do, the earlier decision as to the amount of time allotted to it had to be rescinded, and it has now become a one-quarter course with two sessions of one and a half hours' duration each.

It stands to reason that this reduction of time has made it impossible to carry out fully the generic intent of the course as far as the application of principles to other than child-placement situations is concerned, and now only through hints here and there can the student be encouraged to apply these principles on his own. He will be helped, though, in this endeavor by specialized bibliographies that lead him to literature dealing with placement of adults.

DISCUSSION: DO SPECIALIZED COURSES NEED AN APOLOGY?

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OUR PROFESSION is new and both internal and external pressures have brought about rapid evolution and change. Perhaps it is natural that the terms it uses should also change their meanings. "Generic" and "specific" are two such terms. In the report of the Milford Conference, published twenty-six years ago, the common elements of casework in all settings were identified. Casework as a whole was the "generic." In its specializations—then described as family casework, child welfare, medical social work, psychiatric social work, probation and parole, and

school social work—knowledge and skills "specific" to these settings were recognized.¹ Currently, the words "generic" and "specific" have taken on new meanings or are in the process of doing so. Presently, elements of knowledge, skill and philosophy common to all social work are being identified as "generic" and there is some evidence that the areas of social work—casework, social group work, community organization, administration, and research—are beginning to be regarded as the "specializations" in which "specific" knowledge and skills are needed. However, in this evolution in terminology and the concepts underlying it, there is still

¹ American Association of Social Workers, *Social Case Work; Generic and Specific; A Report of the Milford Conference*, New York, 1929.

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² "Basic Work Education Teaching Report 1954 Council on

some confusion as to the frame of reference in which these terms are to be placed.²

Within the context of these developments Dr. Schulze poses her question, and describes the manner in which the new course "Placement as Social Treatment" took its place in the curriculum at the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago. The workshop which helped evolve this course postulated its "rationale, purpose, and content" as follows:

1. Major emphasis should be placed on teaching the value of a new and corrective life experience as treatment. . . .
2. The study of homefinding records will also contribute significantly to the student's learning, as it gives him an opportunity to study the interplay of normal family life, which the study of families under agency care does not afford him as readily. . . .
3. The student needs to learn to differentiate the foster-parent and the houseparent in the institution from a client. . . .

Then, alas! A quandary! It occurred to some workshop members that these were generic principles. Why then should they not be incorporated into the teaching of the basic casework sequence of courses? Such knowledge would be valuable to all caseworkers, particularly to those in agencies in which adult clients were placed in living situations away from their own homes. "What other rationale, then," was the query of the workshop group, "do we have for setting up a new course focusing on the child in placement?" The group concluded that it would be acceptable to have such a course because much of what the students learned in it would be generic anyway, "applicable to work with clients of all ages;" the course would elaborate and use knowledge from psychiatric information courses; children frequently illustrate dramatically the effect of a new and corrective living experience; and "social work as a humanitarian profession conceives it as not only valid but mandatory

to put prevention first." There was to be a further safeguard against this course being thought of as specialization "by the instructor using every opportunity to point out the application of principles to other placement situations. . . ." By stating the "generic purpose and content of the course" in the first session "the student from the beginning should understand that one age group and field is being studied to formulate principles for use with other age groups and settings where treatment is also mainly given through a new and corrective living experience."

Validity of Specialized Course

To this reader, Dr. Schulze's article carries the implication that it is appropriate for a course to have a place in the curriculum only if it can be freed from the "contamination" of being "specialized" and only if it can somehow or other be forced into the "generic mold." "Specialized" casework courses can make a significant contribution to the education of a professional social worker. Their value shall be examined with reference to the field of child welfare.

First, the provision of specialized casework courses within the curriculum is compatible with principles of learning. The well-motivated student with a concept of service (and we are not talking about pathological martyrdom or immolation) is necessarily concerned not only with processes and methods but with people. He is interested in the persons to be helped through casework, with the groups to be served by social group work, with community organization for a purpose, with administration as a framework for effective service, with research to find answers so that social work can be more helpful. The specialized casework course makes use of the focused energies which are generated by the student's particular interest and concern for certain kinds of people and problems. It provides a constructive channel for his appropriate emotional involvement.

Applying Generic Knowledge to Specifics

Secondly, precisely because a specialized casework course deals with case situations which have some elements in common the

² "Basic Content and Evolving Curricula in Social Work Education—Implications for Class and Field Teaching and for Practice," Subject Area Workshop I, Report 1954 Proceedings, Annual Program Meeting, Council on Social Work Education, p. 3.

student deepens his understanding of the generic elements in casework. Analysis of the processes of social study, diagnosis and treatment is generic to all casework courses.* Since casework deals with the problems of persons within their social situations it is necessary for all caseworkers to understand normal and abnormal aspects of physical, mental and emotional development. It is equally important that the caseworker be able to perceive the opportunities which the social environment has provided for the individual's growth, and to recognize those environmental pressures which might have thwarted his development. All caseworkers need to be able to assess the quality of the individual's adaptive capacities as they are revealed in family relationships, work, play, school religious interests, friendships, and in activities in formal and informal social groups. Similarly, ability to establish and to use the professional relationship is basic in all casework. Knowledge and use of community resources is important in any setting. Interviewing skill is essential. No casework course, be it labeled generic or specific, can be justified in a graduate school of social work if it only succeeds in illustrating for the students how a specific person or family unit was helped in a given circumstance. Each case must be taught in such a way that students recognize principles of study, diagnosis and treatment which can be applied to other case situations.

Certain emphases would be obvious in a specialized course concerned with children in foster care. Diagnoses of familial situations and evaluations of familial strength to determine whether placement of a child was needed would be an important area of study. The significance of separation to parent and child, the role of the worker in relation to child, parent and foster parent, the study of foster homes and adoption homes, and determination of the type of foster care best suited to a child's needs—these are essential phases of child placing in which casework processes are used.

* This might be applicable to courses only in schools with a diagnostic casework orientation.

Our inadequacies in the process of home finding and home studies illustrate the need for students to be given more help in learning to apply some of their generic knowledge to the specifics of a particular setting. Repeatedly we fail to use our generic understanding of personality manifestations in studying foster homes, and consequently submit children to placements which are bound to fail. We did not *see* that, although the thirty-eight-year-old childless woman declared her interest in and liking for children, she had never found ways to "borrow" children to take care of, even for a little while. Our case record described her tidy grooming and her spick and span house but we did not *see* it—and then we were distressed when she could not bear the messiness of the ten-year-old boy we placed in her care. And she simply cannot stand his little-boy smell!

Jeanette Regensburg has written:

. . . the conceptualization of methods utilized in the students' chosen field of practice, accompanied by steady drill in their application, deserves a high priority in the curriculum. Systematic approached to the day-to-day aspects of work require logical deduction and induction; and somehow with all the effort put into social work education, practitioners tend to play by ear. The knowledge and skills acquired in the basic years seem to lack sufficient transferability when the graduate enters employment. Processes, procedures, and techniques common to social casework practice are identifiable even though function, structure, and policy in agencies may differ. Yet it is not uncommon for practitioners to approach each time *de novo* an application, a study or exploratory process, the task of evaluating case data, and the planning of casework treatment. . . . One can point out the same difficulty in transferability in the handling of recurrent activities which have a common meaning to clients, such as termination of contact, transfer of worker, separation of child from home, and so on.³

Comparison and contrast of similar situations in the specialized course can encourage the transferability of knowledge which Miss Regensburg seeks.

For instance, it is important for all students to learn that new and frightening situations call for new adaptations by the in-

³ Jeanette Regensburg, "Professional Attributes, Knowledge and Skills in Practice: Educational Priorities," *Social Work Journal*, April 1953, pp. 51-55.

dividual. Such understanding involves many kinds of knowledge, of which the following are but a few: From the content of psychiatric courses, the student's knowledge about the ego and the mechanisms of defense help him understand the reaction of the individual. Social science concepts concerning means by which the group defines the role of the newcomer in its midst may be applicable in some situations. Principles of social study alert the student to recognizing that the individual's reaction to a new situation may be over-determined by the meaning which it derives from a previously stressful experience. Furthermore, the caseworker learns how he can help alleviate the strain by appropriately directed treatment. Such kinds of knowledge are basic to all settings.

Separation from familiar persons and places, and the loss of real or wished-for-love is a specific kind of new and frightening experience which many human beings are called upon to bear, and which the placed child has always borne. In the specialized course the student learns that "separation" means a different thing to each child, depending upon the child's age and personality equipment, upon the nature of the real (or fancied) situation from which he is separated and his concept (realistic or distorted) of the situation to which he is going. By case comparison, the student sees that reactions to this experience are varied indeed. Physiological symptoms mark one child's response. He loses his appetite—or eats ravenously; becomes nauseated; has a fever; catches cold; or shows numerous other physical symptoms. The intellectual functioning of another child is impaired. The teacher complains that he cannot concentrate. Still another youngster regresses emotionally; or he defends himself against his pain by refusing to trust again the love that is offered him. And naturally, the student realizes that although the hurt might "show" more in one area of functioning than another, the total personality is involved.

By learning that there may be a wide variety of manifestations in response to a similar situation, the student learns *how* to look at a problem. A dictionary definition of

"diagnosis" is "scientific discrimination between similar things or conditions." It is in the examination of "similar things or conditions" that the specialized course can help the student sharpen his capacity to discriminate.

Integrated Learning is Favored

Thirdly, the specialized casework course provides excellent opportunities for the student to integrate his knowledge from all areas of the course curriculum and from field work practice. In the current emphasis that the curriculum be "integrated" and "generic," these two different attributes are sometimes confused. They may parallel each other, but they cannot be regarded as identical qualities. By integrated learning, we mean that a student knows that all parts of his learning are interdependent; he begins to use knowledge from one area of learning to give further meaning to other areas of knowledge and to help him see the rationale in the way he uses himself in his field work practice. He sees that the profession has some knowledge and skills which are needed by all its practitioners and that it has philosophy and purposes common to all its parts. He recognizes continuity in the history of social work and sees it in the perspective of social, economic and political forces. He is clearly aware that if social work is to live up to its status as a profession, its practice must change in response to new knowledge derived from its own experience, and must also reflect those new findings from the biological, psychological and social sciences which have pertinence to its work. He acknowledges that one part of his responsibility as a professional person is to bring about further changes so that persons, groups and communities will be served more effectively.

In the specialized casework course, again precisely because the focus of attention is limited, such integrated learning is favored. For instance, study of one case situation reveals that a child is not able to use foster home care for the degree and type of his disturbance requires care and treatment in an institution for emotionally disturbed chil-

dren. Obviously this draws upon his knowledge from psychiatric courses. The instructor reminds the student that he learned about trends in the care of dependent children in his public welfare courses, pointing out that at our present level of understanding, we realize that foster home *versus* institutional care is no longer an issue, for all varieties of facilities are needed within a community to provide appropriate treatment for children who need care away from their own homes. However, the student also knows that treatment home facilities are very scarce. His community organization courses help him to think in terms of priorities of needs and to examine some of the processes whereby new services are brought into being. In his field work experience, he may find examples of his placement agency creating new services within its own structure, or helping bring about their establishment elsewhere in the community by cooperating with the central planning body for social work. This particular problem—the inadequacy of treatment home facilities—may also raise questions as to the respective roles of private and public agencies. Obviously, such integrated learning which draws upon all areas of knowledge must also be encouraged in the sequence of generic casework courses. But by concentrated attention upon a circumscribed area of practice, the student can more readily recognize the interdependent nature of all branches of professional knowledge and practice, even though in the specialized casework course as in generic casework courses, the immediate focus is upon the casework processes.

Untested Areas are Defined

In a fourth highly important way, the specialized casework course can contribute to the student's professional growth. Social work educators, in classes and in the field, must give more attention to defining our areas of ignorance. If we are to develop new knowledge and devise more effective ways of helping people, we must acknowledge what we do not know. The instructor has an obligation to remind students of untested as-

sumptions, of factors that have not been fully explored as to their effect upon the help we try to extend, of practices which continue in spite of research which suggests their invalidity. For instance, we tend to assume and perhaps rightly that agency adoption placements are, on the whole, more "successful" than independent placements. Yet there have been few comparative studies made to test the validity of this assumption. We continue, in some agencies, to refuse to permit a parent to visit his child for a few weeks after placement, because this presumably would "upset" the child, in spite of Anna Freud's findings of an opposite nature in her work with bombed-out children in England during the war years.

The teacher of the specialized course has a particular obligation to help students approach their professional careers with a combination of humility, pride, and courage—humility because we know too little about how to prevent social and personal problems and about alleviating them when they exist; pride that we can use the knowledge and skills which we do possess, and courage to learn new and better ways. The social worker will be expected to draw upon an ever-increasing body of knowledge. This calls for a balanced point of view as to the role of generic and of specialized knowledge. We cannot each take all knowledge, even in social work, as our province, nor expect the student to have equal capacity in all areas.⁴

Miss Coyle was referring to social work as a whole as the "generic" and the areas of practice as "specific," but to a certain extent this can also be applied to casework as the "generic" and to its fields as the "specific." The teacher of a specialized course must have a broad range of knowledge and skills, and transferable competence. Beyond that, out of study and practice, she is obliged to have a depth of understanding and expertise in the specialized field of practice. This includes knowledge of the historical development of the field; current theoretical formulations,

⁴ Grace L. Coyle, "The Role of the Teacher in the Creation of an Integrated Curriculum," *Social Work Journal*, April 1952, p. 73.

practices, and problems; and awareness of the gaps in knowledge and in services which are yet to be filled.

Agency Responsibility for Continued Professional Development

Schools of social work can only help the student begin the process of integrated professional growth. The agency in which the graduate takes his place as a new worker encourages or discourages his further development. The agency which is smug about its practices and sure that nothing better can possibly evolve is not likely to encourage experimentation or critical thinking. The agency unresponsive to changing needs in the community because "that isn't what our founders intended us to do," or because "these risky cases are hard to interpret to our supporters," or because "we never have done that" stifles the young worker's motivation to serve. The agency unwilling to share in community planning, look clearly at unmet needs, and re-align services when necessary, belies the fundamental philosophy that social agencies are a product of the community and responsible to it. It is questionable whether such an agency can make very good use of a truly professional staff, and probably "trained workers" within such a setting represent a great waste of time, energy, and money that went into the staff's graduate education. However, this does not necessarily lead to the simple, uncomplicated, black-and-white formulation that, therefore, no school graduate should take jobs except in the "best" agencies. Each worker has a professional obligation to attempt to bring about change where change is needed.

On the other hand, that agency which consciously examines its practices, uses the best consultation available from these other disciplines from which we need assistance, recognizes itself as a part of the complex of services in the community and is sensitively responsive to new needs and new ways of helping, and which courageously undertakes research to evaluate the effectiveness of its services has a right to expect that the young

men and women who graduate from schools of social work will have the best possible preparation.

Every teacher worth her salt hopes that by the time today's "average" student has had as much experience as today's "average" practitioner, the erstwhile student will be somewhat more effective than his senior colleagues. The teacher hopes that quite a few students will become a great deal more effective and that a few of today's students will forge far ahead in the tomorrows that are before them. The good teacher hopes that fifty years from now some of what she teaches today will seem as naive as some of the "knowledge and principles" of fifty years ago seem to the current generation of teachers and students—and that some of the everlasting values and truths will continue to be cherished and passed on.

The historian, Arthur Schlesinger, points out that around the time of World War I and immediately thereafter, the intense desire for scientific knowledge brought about minute specialization in learning which obliterated the "larger implications and interrelations" between and among areas of knowledge.⁵ This same push toward specialization also had its reverberations in social work. Courses in schools of social work tended to be highly specialized. In the decade of the twenties four separate professional social work organizations were founded. Currently, we see the opposite trend. One professional organization is about to replace the several groups, and, as indicated above, the generic elements in social work education are being identified. The complaint against extreme specialization in science was that this bred narrowly trained technicians who learned "more and more about less and less."⁶ The same complaint might have been levelled against social work. In the new trend, it behooves us to guard against the equally disastrous position of teaching students "less and less about more and more."

⁵ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Rise of Modern America 1865-1951* (4th ed., New York: MacMillan & Co., 1951), p. 395.

⁶ Loc. cit.

In the final paragraph of Dr. Schulze's article she states that a reduction in the time allotted to the course "Placement as Social Treatment" has "made it impossible to carry out fully the generic intent of the course as far as the application of principles to other than child-placement situations is concerned, and now only through hints here and there can the student be encouraged to apply these principles on his own." Yes, indeed. Dr. Schulze's course would most likely be a very full one, crowded with students and packed with values for them, for her body of knowl-

edge, skill, and understanding is substantial—and substantive. The richness of her wisdom and experience must contribute markedly to the students' learning experiences. Her sharp recognition that institutional life must prepare children for life outside the institution, her careful evaluation of the values and limitations in group care, are but a few aspects of her specialized expertise. We are glad that her course is required "for all students in child welfare field placements and open to all students in other specializations."

DISCUSSION: THE PLACE OF SPECIALIZED COURSES IN A GENERIC CURRICULUM

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I APPRECIATE the opportunity to comment on Dr. Schulze's article which describes the reorganization of two courses concerned with child placement (one with foster home and the other with institutional care) and their integration, as a single course, within the curriculum of the School of Social Service Administration of the University of Chicago. The article, and the thinking and planning of which it is the result, is illustrative of the trend in social work education toward viewing the curriculum as an integrated whole rather than as a collection of relatively unrelated courses or specialized sequences plus an experience in research and in field work. This trend, first evident in the formulation in 1932, by the American Association of Schools of Social Work,¹ of the Minimum Curriculum (groupings of courses to be offered by all member schools but not necessarily required of all students), more pronounced in the

establishing in 1943 of the "basic eight" as the core course content of schools of social work, has found its fullest expression in the relatively recent definition, in 1953, by the Council on Social Work Education of three curriculum areas (the social services, human growth and development, and social work practice) which in addition to research and field work, now constitute the required educational experience for all students engaged in Master's degree programs in social work.

A comparable trend in practice is seen in social work's identification of itself as one profession rather than as a collection of specialties, whether of field or method, through its recent affirmative vote for a single professional membership organization. The significance of the new organization² lies in its requirement of a common base in professional education for its membership, and in its provision of opportunity for all of its members to work together on common problems and interests, as well as for certain social work specializations to make their contributions and continue their development as identifiable groups, but as parts of a whole rather than as separate entities.

¹ The Council on Social Work Education succeeded the American Association of School Social Workers as the professional organization concerned with, and standard setting for, education for social work.

² The National Association of Social Workers to be established October 1, 1955.

Social Workers are Mobile

There are historical reasons for the fragmented beginnings of social work practice and social work education. The impulse to help troubled individuals with problems in social living, to help groups achieve constructive social purposes, to effect beneficent changes in adverse social conditions, has expressed itself in such a variety of ways, through programs of such diverse sponsorship and support, involving the provision of social services so divergent in character, that it is small wonder the profession has not yet and may never with certainty and finality, establish the boundaries of what is and is not social work. A comparable difficulty might be expected and has been experienced in determining the nature and content of social work education. What should be the minimum essential in educational experience for every student as he leaves a school of social work to practice in established fields, in undeveloped fields, in fields yet to be conceived as appropriate for social work effort? Everything that is known about the professional history of social workers, particularly social workers in recent years, testifies to the high degree of their professional mobility. They move from service to service—from child placement, to family casework, to psychiatric social work—and, in level of responsibility—from practice to supervision to administration—usually without returning to a professional school of social work for a new educational experience to prepare them for their new responsibilities. Only the basic method, social casework or social group work, tends to remain constant as the field of operation which constitutes their major practice course and field work experience in school and continues to constitute their field of operation throughout their professional lives. And even this is subject to increasing flexibility as caseworkers work with groups in a variety of settings, and group workers offer individualized services within agencies established primarily to serve groups.

Integrated Curricula Difficult to Achieve

The formulation and offering of social work curricula designed to provide the student with an integrated educational experience and to constitute preparation for his practice in a wide variety of settings, and at successive levels of responsibility is further complicated by the fact that despite the general mobility of most social workers, social work faculty members, drawn from practice, usually persons of considerable maturity, have frequently approached their teaching assignments with commitment to and long experience in a particular field. Their own identification, on coming to a faculty, has often been more with a segment of the profession than with social work as a total field, or even, more with a related discipline which has contributed much to social work (such as psychiatry or medicine) than with social work itself. Many of the early schools of social work began as schools preparing social work specialists: family social workers, medical social workers, psychiatric social workers. In some instances the first classes were held in a specific agency's offices and the first teachers in such schools were, principally, members of that agency's staff.

For faculties of schools of social work to "think generically," a major shift in identification on the part of many faculty members, from the part to the whole of the profession, and from practice to education, has been required. It has been possible to achieve integrated curricula providing for social work practice in a variety of settings, only as this identification has been achieved, and only as the broad outlines of what constitutes the field of social work have been established, and the essential knowledges and psychological base for its practice as well as the generic elements in its skills, defined. It is well to appreciate here that the historical development of social work education, as I have described it, has contributed, to present educational programs, not only problem and fragmentation, but richness too. And in the "swing toward the generic" it is important that all that has been taught as specific sequence or specialized course content be,

not discarded, but reevaluated, with consideration for what, of that which has been conceived as "specific" content, should become part of a requirement for all students, what should remain specific for certain students, and how what remains specific shall be integrated within the student's total educational experience.

The reevaluation by the Chicago School's faculty of the content of the two courses concerned with child placement as part of its total curriculum study and revision, and the recasting of their content and their place in the curriculum, is a case in point of this kind of creative activity in the field of social work education.

Students Need Both Generic and Specific

Perhaps I can best state my reaction to what Dr. Schulze said and to the way the specific is related to the generic in social work education in the Chicago School, so far as the child placement content of this one course is concerned, by defining my own position on specialization in education for social work. We might assume that the present purpose of all social work schools is to prepare social work students for practice as professional social workers within a variety of settings, though usually through the use of one or the other primary methods of social casework or social group work, or within a program making use of one or the other of those primary methods in offering its service. We might assume, too, a general recognition that practice in any specific field involves the use of social work knowledge and skill which should be possessed by all social workers (i.e. "generic" knowledge and skill), but also knowledge specific to the particular field, and refinements of skill appropriate for and modified by the specific agency function which is being discharged. It is obviously impossible, even if it were desirable, for specific content related to all possible fields of social work practice to be made available in any school of social work. Then what shall determine the selection of specific courses and sequences to be offered?

The fact that approved sequences in psychiatric social work, medical social work and school social work³ have already been established and are currently being offered as specializations within the method of social casework does not result in their being considered any differently from what might be conceived as specializations in any other field of social casework practice such as child placement, family casework, public assistance, casework in the courts, etc. The human growth and behavior area in addition to its knowledge content develops a psychological base for practice, and the entire sequence in the social services area in addition to its knowledge content develops a base in social values. I see the entire sequence in the human growth and behavior area as essential for all students whatever their specialization, caseworkers and group workers alike, and for caseworkers being prepared for and operating in any field of practice. This is a controversial point. I can conceive that there might be supplementary content in either or both of these areas for students concentrating in one or another field of practice. Nevertheless, in general all students need the same understanding of human growth and development, the same experience of themselves and others as living growing human beings, the same knowledge and appreciation of the historical and present-day field of social welfare and of the socioeconomic context within which social services have developed and are currently being offered. It has seemed that the offering of any specialization in a school of social work might well serve to enrich these content areas (human growth and development, and the social services) rather than to result in separate or "additional" course content.

Place of Specialization in Curriculum

I see the specialization or concentration in the preparation of social work students as composed of three elements in the curriculum:

³ A committee of the Accreditation Commission of the Council on Social Work Education is currently at work on reviewing the criteria for the approved specializations, and considering how specializations should be related to and integrated within the total curriculum.

(1) the second year field work placement, (2) the area in which the research is done and the thesis written, and (3) a practice or methods course or courses. Field work is obviously specific in the sense that it is inevitably experienced in a social agency which offers some specific service, although the process through which the service is made available is identifiable as a social work process because of certain generic elements common to all social work processes, and specific for any casework or any group work process. The setting and content of the research project seem to me desirably to be related to the second year field work placement, since the student's interest, understanding and experience are currently concentrated there, and an integration and deepening of his learning can thereby be fostered.

The primary remaining "specificity" has to do with the practice course or courses. Here, as the determinant of what specific seminars in practice should be offered by any given school in any given year, would be the fields constituting the current field work placements of its students. For example, there might well be a seminar in family casework both public and private, in child placement, in psychiatric social work, in medical social work, in school social work, in casework in the field of delinquency. Schools committed to offering any of the approved specializations in social casework would of course offer practice seminars in those areas. In instances in which relatively few students were placed for field work in a given practice area there could be appropriate combinations of field work placements represented within specialized practice seminars. Any specialized practice course I would see as an integral part of the required practice sequence. It seems to belong in the second year, preferably in the fourth semester, after the student has made his own principles of practice as they are manifest in all fields for a given method (casework or group work). At this point the student would have completed a sequential series of practice courses, in which case record material representing practice in a variety of settings has been used, and in

which the students in each practice course have been concurrently placed in a variety of field work agencies. Progression in learning the generic elements of, and developing skill in, the social casework helping process can best be assured through establishing any specialized practice courses as part of the required practice sequence and not in addition to it. Furthermore, I would see the specialized practice courses as limited to students having a concurrent field work placement or, in the case of schools having block field work plans, an anticipated or just completed field work placement, in the specialized area. This is based on the belief that students can work most productively in a specific practice course which represents their current field of professional operation, since they have an opportunity to draw from their immediate experience in making generalizations about the "specifics," and to apply to a specific situation the generalizations which have been drawn. I have found such homogeneous classes, working with a sense of reality and immediacy, taking points to greater depths and working on refinements of process in the specific setting. This is done with more interest and facility than is usual for students in a specialized practice course open both to those having a concurrent field work placement in that function and those placed in other functions. This plan of providing for "specialization" within a curriculum which is generic, means that every student, upon graduation, would be prepared generically, in the sense of having a grasp of, and identification with, the social purposes and values as well as the psychological base and values, which unify all of social work; an appreciation of lacks and achievements in the programs through which social services are and have been offered, an understanding of how human beings grow and change and what they need for growth, and a comprehension of and beginning skill in one basic helping process in social work (social casework or social group work). It means that at the same time every student would have had a concentration, or specialization, in the sense of having had a specialized practice

seminar in the area of his second year field work placement, as well as an experience in research and thesis writing in that specific area.

Focus for Course Needs Clarification

Dr. Schulze works from the base: "How can I make this specific content generic;" I work from the base: "How shall I make the generic content specific?" What are the specifics in the use of the generic skill in a particular setting? How shall I teach the specialized practice seminar in a way which helps the student come into possession of that which, in knowledge and skill, is specific to the function constituting his current field placement while achieving progression in the generic knowledge and skill of social casework process?

It is not clear that what she describes as a course in the "treatment" (practice) sequence, is truly a practice course. While she places it there, she refers to it as being concerned with the relative merits of institutional and foster home care and of both kinds of care as being in themselves "treatment." Three reasons were given for the Chicago faculty's decision to offer the course to students other than those having concurrent field work in child placement.

1. That students would have a chance to learn about children in such a course;
2. That they can study the activities and responses of children reacting to a situation particularly conducive to their growth; and
3. That the course has a special significance because it is in a field concerned with prevention.

This entire rationale suggests an unclear focus for the course itself. Certainly a consideration of foster care and institutional care historically and as current possibilities of care for children outside of their own homes would constitute an important part of the social services sequence for all students. How children grow and develop, what they need in human relationships and social opportunities to grow, and how lacks and distortions, and deprivations in relationship and social opportunity can affect growth would be a part of the human growth and behavior sequence. Then, too, child placement as a

social service seems to me no more "preventive" than school social work, family casework or casework in a variety of other settings.

My own focus for a specialized course in child placement in the practice sequence in the area of child placement would be on the use of material from both institutional and foster care settings to teach the nature of the casework skill in child placement. That is how, in addition to the field work and thesis requirement in this area, I would see a concentration in child placement achieved. This would involve stressing the caseworker's part in helping the own parent decide (when he had a choice) on the kind of care he wanted for his child, and to relate himself to whatever care he chose or was obliged to use, and to his child in it, so long as the child was in placement. It would be focused on what is involved in helping the child move into, and use, the kind of "away from home care" available to him. This would include more than "preparing the child for placement." It would be concerned with the placement agency or institutional worker's continuing relationship with the child as well as with his parents in an effort to help placement "work" for parents and for child. Finally it would focus on the nature of the social worker's help and service to the foster parents or to the personnel of the institution. In short, a practice course in child placement, as in any other specialized area, would be concerned with social work practice; with helping the worker go further in the development of his generic casework skill and in understanding its theoretical base, while deepening both his conception of it and his skill in using it within a particular function. In describing this course, I felt that Dr. Schulze was leaving out the specific nature of the social casework contribution in terms of a helping process to own parents, placed child, and careholder whether foster parent or cottage parent.

Applying Generic to Specific

Not only a school of social work's conviction about the place of specialization in the

total curriculum but also its concept of the nature of the specialization involved, and of the social workers' responsibility within it, affects (1) the definition of what shall constitute the specialization, (2) where course content dealing with the specialization shall fall in the curriculum (whether in the social services human growth and behavior, or practice area) and (3) the content conceived as falling in the practice area, what its focus shall be, and who shall be admitted to courses concerned with it.

Dr. Schulze comments that reducing the time for the course from two quarters to one has made it impossible to carry out the generic intent of the course as far as the application of principles to other than child placement situations is concerned. She writes ". . . now only through hints here and there can the student be encouraged to apply these principles on his own." Is it not reasonable to suppose that if the generic principles of social work helping are clearly recognized they will be an integral part of the teaching of any specialized practice course? What will be specialized will be how the particular kind of problem and the service set up to deal with it affect the content and nature of the helping process. What are common feelings and problems experienced in the course of giving and receiving this particular service? What may be stirred up and would need to be resolved for all who are party to it? How can the student be helped to recognize and deal with such feelings and problems, in his clients and himself, while making the service available? What collaborative relationships as with members of other disciplines are involved in the giving of this service and what does skill in this aspect of his work require? What are special considerations for social work process and the form it shall take which evolve out of a particular social agency's function?

As the student is helped in a specialized practice course to work in this way on using his generic social casework knowledge and skill in the specific area which constitutes his field placement, he will have made his own a *way of working on the use of generic principles*

in a specific situation (agency function). It is this way of working on the application and use of the generic social casework helping process within a specific situation which seems to me to constitute the true focus for the specialized practice course. In addition, its content will, of course, serve to help the student examine and possess something of what is involved in practicing as a social worker in the specific function under consideration. But there is vastly more specific content for every specialized area of practice than can ever be taught in any two-year curriculum, particularly in one committed to the preparation of professional social workers for practice in a variety of settings.

Summary

That I have taken issue and expressed difference with Dr. Schulze at so many points does not obscure my genuine appreciation of what she and the Chicago School have put into working on the important problem of relating the specific to the generic in social work education. I would be sorry if that were so. Schools of social work at this point in history may be expected and should be encouraged, to find many different answers to this problem of general concern to us all, within the framework of the individual philosophy of each of us, and within the philosophy which embraces all of us. My reactions are my own and are set down as grist for the general mill.

To recapitulate: I see every student in a school of social work prepared both generically and specifically in his two-year program. I see his specific preparation or concentration as involving a second year field placement, research project or thesis, and practice seminar in a given practice area. I see learning to practice in some one function as part of what is generic to any social work helping process. I see the particular area of concentration as of less significance, in determining how well or where a graduate will be prepared to practice, than its focus on helping him develop a capacity to recognize the importance of, and become responsible

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for, making his own whatever is involved in practicing in any field in which he may subsequently be employed.

The course, Placement as Social Treatment, which Dr. Schulze defines as falling in the practice sequence, seems, as she describes it, not to have a practice focus. For this reason I would wonder how it could carry the student further in his understanding of and skill in the social work helping process in any setting while concentrating on what is involved in using that skill within the child placement function. I question a practice course in a specific area being offered students in addition to, and concurrently with,

other practice courses as appears to be the case here. I question the admission to a specialized practice course of students whose concurrent field placement is in some other unrelated field. Progression and integration are best assured through specialized practice courses, being a part of every student's required practice sequence, and in the area of his concurrent field work placement. The fact that a specialized practice course in child placement (or in any other function) is elective and non-credit carrying, might interfere with the student's recognition and use of it as an integral and sequential part of his preparation as a professional social worker.

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YOUNG WORKERS AND THEIR VOCATIONAL NEEDS

Gertrude Folks Zimand

General Secretary
National Child Labor Committee
New York, New York

The need for protection and guidance of the child worker increases as the number of minors employed in industry and agriculture multiplies. Social workers, the author shows, have an opportunity to give effective help to the child and his family with these problems.

THE STARTING POINT for a discussion of child labor today is the kind of adult we want the child to become. For, except in agriculture, today's young workers are chiefly high school age boys and girls, roughly 14 to 17 years. Our approach to child labor regulation must therefore take into consideration not only its immediate effects but its bearing on their preparation for the responsibilities for adult life.

Child Labor Laws and Juvenile Delinquency

This is important because a new line of attack on child labor laws has developed and is giving us great concern. Juvenile delinquency has increased during the same period that progress in child labor and school at-

tendance regulations has been secured. Some groups claim that there is a causal relationship between the two; they state categorically that child labor laws are depriving children of the opportunity for useful work, breeding idleness and thereby contributing to juvenile crime.

Juvenile delinquency is disturbing and it is baffling. People need a scapegoat—and want a panacea—for this complex problem. So they call for relaxation of child labor laws. Those who are against child labor regulation, not because they are concerned about the welfare of children but because they want to employ them, are alert to the public interest in juvenile delinquency and seem to exploit it. Even bowling alley proprietors claim that setting pins at night will keep youngsters out of trouble!

Others attack the basic idea that children should be required to attend school until 16 years. They say that many children gain

From an address delivered at the Southern Regional Conference of the Child Welfare League of America, Charleston, South Carolina, February 25, 1955.

nothing from staying in school after 14, especially those they call "behavior problems." They want these children released or even put out of school and permitted to go to work. This would undoubtedly make things easier for the schools, but just as certainly it would make things harder for the children. It would not remove the cause of their delinquent behavior. It would take them away from the school, the one institution that may be able to give them the counselling, guidance and the individual help they need, and plunge them into the competitive labor market on their own and unsupervised. Industry is not geared to help the individual child with his problems. The schools should be.

Are we so impoverished and unimaginative in our social thinking, so reluctant to probe into the real causes of juvenile delinquency, so loathe to expend the funds that are essential for any basic work with juvenile offenders or pre-delinquents, that the only remedy we can think of is to shove them out of school and into the labor market? Social workers can help preserve our hard-won child labor and school attendance standards and create better public understanding of why these laws are needed.

Children Deprived of Schooling

In the eight States participating in the Southern Regional Conference, nearly 110,000 children of 14 and 15 are working part- or full-time in industry or agriculture.* This is one in every eight, and it is considerably more than in the rest of the United States where only one child in every twelve is working. The question may well be asked—Are not children of 14 and 15 years old enough to work? Is it not good for them to have work experience? Our answer is yes. Work experience has value for many children, and we

would not want to bar all employment under 16 years. What concerns us is the conditions under which they are employed.

The first question is does their work interfere with their schooling? In these States, 30,000 children, considerably more than a fourth of all those who are working, are not enrolled in school. This percentage is twice as high as in the rest of the United States. To put it in a nutshell: These States have 19 per cent of all the 14- and 15-year-old children in the nation. But they have 26 per cent of those who are working. And they have 42 per cent of those who are out of school for work—far more than their "quota."

It is sometimes said—usually with the implication that this makes it less serious—that the reason so many children are out of school and working in the South is because it is an agricultural region and the children are working on farms. It is true that nearly two-thirds of the 14- and 15-year-old workers in these States are in farm work. But this is no reason for complacency. Rural children need as much education as other children. They will have the same responsibilities as adults that urban children will have—as homemakers and parents, as citizens and voters, as workers and consumers.

One pressing need, therefore, is to take out of State child labor and school attendance laws, the exemptions for farm work. A Federal Law bars children under 16 years from working on farms during school hours, but this applies only to farms which produce goods for shipment in interstate commerce. A general 16-year minimum in State laws for work during school hours, with no exception for agriculture, would make Federal and State standards the same and would reach employed children who are not under the Federal Law. But there is another group of farm workers in the Census count—the unpaid workers on the home farm. Child labor laws do not—and should not—regulate such employment. A strictly enforced 16-year compulsory attendance law *with no exemptions for rural children* is the only way to insure that farm work does not deprive rural children of schooling.

* Three pieces of information prepared for this Conference are available through the National Child Labor Committee, 419 Fourth Avenue, N. Y. 16: 1. the number of young workers in the eight southern states by age groups and school attendance; 2. recommended child labor standards and how these states measure up; 3. a detailed analysis of child labor and school attendance figures, the provisions of the child labor law and bibliographical reference for any individual state.

Conditions of Employment

The second important question relating to the suitability of work for 14 and 15 year olds is the kind of work they are doing. Leaving out agriculture, there are 36,000 children employed in other occupations in these eight States. Of the five large categories the largest number are in retail trades. Next come children employed as operators, laborers, service workers, and domestic workers in private homes. There are comparatively few children in clerical and office work. It is difficult to determine just what the children reported as operators and laborers are doing, but it is clear that many of them are employed in manufacturing or processing occupations which are not desirable and usually are illegal for children under 16 years.

The third point to consider about employment for 14 and 15 year olds is the number of hours they work. Even the best kind of job is bad for school-age child if it takes too much of his time, for he should be primarily occupied with education and social growth. Children under 16 years should not be permitted to work more than 8 hours a day and 40 hours a week when they have full-time jobs during vacation periods and even this is too long. Nor should they work more than 3 hours on a school day or more than 18 hours in a school week. Yet the Census figures show that a great many children in these eight States are employed for much longer hours—especially those holding part-time jobs while attending school.

On the whole the laws regulating hours of work in these States are good. All but one have an 8-hour day and 40- or 44-hour week, and all but two limit the number of hours a child may work on a school day. But this type of legislation is difficult to enforce. Child workers are scattered throughout many small establishments. The amount of work done by children, especially those attending school, is an important point to watch.

Finally, night work is unsuitable for children under 16. The Census gives no inkling as to how many children work at night. The laws in these States are fairly good, although three permit children to work under 8 or

9 p.m. This means that the child either is not home for dinner or goes to work after dinner—neither of which seems desirable for a child under 16, especially during the school year when he has homework. The real question is how well the night work laws are enforced. Labor inspectors carry on their investigations primarily in the daytime.

Although the Census does not gather employment data for children under 14, this group cannot be ignored. A few years ago a sample Census count was made and it was estimated that in the country as a whole, 700,000 10 to 13 year olds were employed, about half of them as paid workers, in farm work, as babysitters, errand boys, and in other miscellaneous occupations. Figures were not given for individual States, but this Southern region undoubtedly has a considerable number of these very young workers. In one of these States children of any age may engage in regular work outside school hours, and in 4 others they may be employed at 12 or 13. This is another weakness in State laws that should be remedied.

When we consider 16- and 17-year-old workers, we must remember that these young folk are not children—even though they still are legally. They are fairly well on their way to maturity. They are reaching out for adulthood and many of them in their own minds have achieved it—though not in the minds of their parents and teachers. They are still minors and as such in need of some employment regulation. There are nearly a quarter of a million 16- and 17-year-old workers in these States. Our concern for this group is three-fold:

1. *They should not work in hazardous occupations.* Federal regulations bar their employment in 12 industries (if the industries are in interstate commerce), such as work with explosives, in saw or planing mills, etc. But State legislation is needed also because many jobs not under the Federal law are equally dangerous. These eight States are rather weak in their regulation of hazardous employment for minors.

2. *Hours of work and night work should be limited,* though less strictly than for children

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Outstanding Problems

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under 16. There is little regulation of this kind in these States.

3. *Too many of 16- and 17-year olds are out of school*—135,000—a much larger number than in the rest of the country. An even larger number of these children—and this should raise questions in the minds of social workers—are out of school but not working or seeking work. In all, well over a quarter of a million 16- and 17-year olds in these States—one in every three—are not attending school. The answer does not lie in making school attendance compulsory beyond 16 years, but rather in increasing voluntary attendance until the completion of high school.

Outstanding Legislative Needs

In summary, the outstanding legislative needs in this Southeastern area are:

1. Eliminating the provisions in State child labor and school attendance laws which permit children to work in agriculture when they should be in school.
2. Closing up the loop-holes that permit children under 14 to engage in regular employment.
3. Further regulation of hours and night work for minors of 16 and 17.
4. Stronger provisions on hazardous employment.
5. Stronger enforcement measures which underlie all other measures.

Experience has shown these regulations are necessary to protect children and young people from employment that may jeopardize their health, interfere with their schooling, involve physical or moral hazards, or put obstacles in the way of their normal social development.

The Psychological Factor

The psychological effects of child labor are often overlooked. It is important for youngsters to have time for family life and for the give and take of teen-age life which, though it may frustrate their parents, is essential to their own development. Extra-curricular school activities—athletics, glee clubs, bands, hobby clubs, participation in church affairs, scouting and other youth groups, dating and dancing all play an important role in the development of the adolescent. Even sipping cokes and chatting in the drug store after school, which is a teen-age custom through-

out the United States, is not really the waste of time it seems to be. It is a normal and useful part of the growing-up process. Employment that deprives a child of these informal social contacts is not good. The injury it does may not be immediately apparent, but it may leave scars that affect his attitude for years to come.

Importance of the Right Start for Working Life

Barring undesirable employment is only part of the problem. It is equally important to meet the vocational needs of young people. For work is not merely an economic necessity. It is part of the fabric of life—a fact long recognized in the saying "Work gives life its flavor." Whether a person works in industry, in a profession, or in his own home, his satisfaction in his occupational activities is an important factor in his general effectiveness as a person.

Social workers accept the basic concept that childhood experiences profoundly affect the adult personality. In a sense this applies to the relationship between a child's early experiences about and in work and his vocational adjustment in later years. A person's occupational satisfaction is determined not only by his working conditions, but also by the attitude toward work he has acquired as a child, the preparation he received for working life, the guidance he was given in selecting his work, and his early experiences as a young wage earner.

A child's first job looms up as a milestone in his life—a big step toward adulthood. The wrong start can be a frustrating experience. Getting fired soon after he starts, finding himself in a job that is beyond his capacities or for which he is not prepared, or being kept at a job that does not utilize his abilities or offer him a chance to develop them, or one that presents problems he cannot cope with, problems of industrial relations, or personal relations to his boss or fellow workers—any of these can adversely affect his future working life.

Each year nearly a million boys and girls start full-time work. For many this is an

abrupt change. One day they are pupils in school, an institution operated solely for their welfare. The next day they are on their own, a cog in the vast machine of industrial enterprise, part of a system operated for profit where the needs of the individual are secondary. A transition as sharp as this is a poor start for future occupational satisfaction.

The degree to which a young person has been prepared for this transition may determine whether he becomes an adult who enjoys his work or one who considers work a necessary evil from which he escapes at five o'clock to his real interests. To carry this thought one step further, dissatisfaction with work can carry over to other aspects of living. We all know people whose whole personality seems to change when they leave a job they have disliked and start a new one about which they are enthusiastic. The social worker, therefore, should recognize that the vocational needs of the child are equally as important as his need for health, education, and welfare. For the extent to which his vocational needs are met will determine in part his effectiveness, not only as a worker, but as a parent and as a person.

Helping Youths with Vocational Adjustment

What can be done to insure satisfactory vocational adjustment for young people? The lines of approach are interwoven with efforts in the fields of family welfare, child training and education. Preparation for work, in the broad sense, should begin long before the child is ready to think of any kind of job. Actually it should start in the home in pre-school days when the wise parent trains the child to put away his toys and gradually to take over certain household tasks. Later it extends to the school where the child, from kindergarten on, has certain definite responsibilities. All through school life work experience should continue as the child grows older, changing in nature and content, developing from individual tasks to group work, perhaps including volunteer community projects, and for some, paid part-time work during the high school years.

Merely being in school is not enough. What youngsters get in school—whether it makes them want education—is the vital point. Half the children who enter high school quit before they graduate. Studies of school drop-outs uniformly show that school-leaving today is not due to economic need but to lack of interest in school. The drop-outs feel they are not learning anything worth while.

For the most part they are those we used to call backward or slow learners and many find school a frustrating experience because their studies are beyond their capacities.

In the early 1900's—when there were only 700,000 children in the high schools—the work was primarily college preparatory. Today there are nearly seven million high school students and predictions are for nine to ten million by 1961. This phenomenal increase has brought into the schools children of widely differing backgrounds, interests, aptitudes and abilities. Today's high school must serve three quite different groups: (1) the relatively few students who will go on to college or technical schools; (2) those who will go directly to work when they graduate, and (3) the large number who drop out along the way.

Obviously no one kind of educational program is suitable for all three groups. There must be many different offerings from which young people can select what they need. For those not going on to college, there should be much more emphasis on what is called life adjustment education, schooling that will prepare them, in accordance with their aptitudes and abilities, for the kind of life they will live and for the adult responsibilities they will be assuming.

The National Child Labor Committee agrees with many educators that, for some children the answer lies in supervised part-time school and work programs. In such courses children go to school half a day and work half a day. The school selects the children for the program, arranges for suitable jobs, sees that wages do not undercut adult standards, employs a coordinator to work with industry, and gives them counsel and

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Even when the economic situation is such that industry cannot be expected to take on these part-time children, it is possible to develop community enterprises in which young workers can have the satisfactions that come from work. Probably the greatest need, in helping young folks get the right start in working life, is guidance and counselling, and this is a job in which the social worker is directly concerned.

Guidance must begin when the child is young. The National Conference on Family Life, in a report by its Subcommittee on School Counselling, recommends that "counselling should be available *throughout the entire school career*—from kindergarten through post-high-school education." The specific vocational nature of counselling would not start in the primary grades. But general guidance work with the child—and his parents—as he grows up, to help him select the right kind of school courses, to assist him in his particular problems—whether they involve academic difficulties, personal adjustments, or economic problems—lead quite naturally into vocational counselling as the age for employment approaches.

The Social Worker's Responsibility

There are at least four specific ways in which social workers can help give children a sense of vocational direction and prepare them for the transition from school to work:

1. The family worker in her contacts with parents is in a strategic position. Home environment has an important influence on the child's preparation for working life, and one which to a considerable degree affects the success of whatever the school may try to do. The family's economic status and security, the attitude of parents toward education, their understanding of the aims and activities of the school, their opinions, or prejudices about the prestige attached to different kinds of occupations, their understanding and acceptance of their children's limitations, as well as their talents and ambitions, their

ability to understand the personal problems of their children, their recognition of the child's need for spending money and his desire to earn some of it himself, all play a part in the child's future vocational adjustment. And the social worker is in a position to help the parents help their children.

2. Social workers can also help individual children in families with whom they work. It is partly a question of emphasis—of keeping in mind this aspect of a child's development as he grows older, of consulting with the school, and often of putting the child in touch with the community services that can help him. The social worker may not have herself all the information needed about school courses, occupational requirements and job openings in the community, nor is she probably trained for vocational guidance, but she can recognize the child's need for assistance and see that he gets it. For example, there are local public employment services in more than 1,700 communities in the nation. Almost all of these have a trained counsellor on their staff, and more than half are equipped to give a battery of tests to determine the child's interests, aptitudes and abilities. In many communities there are business and civic groups which are interested in giving vocational help to young people—individually or in groups.

3. Social agencies have primary responsibility for some children—those who have been removed from their own homes and are under direct care as well as those on probation or paroled from institutions. Eventually all such children reach the age when they are discharged from agency care. His vocational plans should have been laid well in advance. He should know what kind of work he is going into and should have been prepared for it—which means much more than merely giving him specific vocational skills.

4. Some social agencies and youth groups operate vocational counselling and placement services for their clients. Such services should offer specialized services for the young worker. Even agencies which do not have the trained personnel needed for specialized vocational counselling can set up pre-vocational

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clinics, where teen-agers nearing the age for employment can come for group discussion or individual advice. A little planning by social agencies can help them with such elementary matters as how to apply for a job, how to fill out application forms, how to conduct a job interview, personal grooming for work, understanding of social security and labor laws, etc. Minor matters, but very helpful to the child who has had no experience in the job world.

The preparation of young people for working life, not in the sense of vocational education but as a continuous process, will be even more important in the years ahead. By about 1960, the increased birth rate of the war years will show up in the number of youngsters seeking employment for the first time. The Census predicts that between 1958 and 1964 there will be an increase of 800,000 in the number of new young workers entering the labor market. America cannot afford to let these young people be absorbed haphazardly, and without preparation, into our complex industrial life. Just as social workers and educators and civic-minded people generally have always worked together to promote the health, education and welfare of our children, so we must begin to plan together to meet the vocational needs of our growing boys and girls.



Standards Project Initiated

Setting standards for specific services in the child welfare field has been a major responsibility of the Child Welfare League since its inception thirty-five years ago when we published the first standards of this kind. It has been a matter of deep concern to the Board and staff of the League that, in spite of constant requests from our members and many others, lack of resources has made it impossible to bring them up to date or to prepare enough new material in line with present-day knowledge. Under a grant recently received from the Ittleson Family Foundation of New York, the League is now initiating a three-year project to formulate and distribute comprehensive standards of practice for agencies providing social services to children.

The interdisciplinary nature of these services requires the project to include participation of the various fields whose findings have an important bearing on good child welfare standards such as psychology, psychiatry,

education, law, medicine, religion, genetics, anthropology, sociology, and social work education. The work of the Midcentury White House Conference will be carried further and its findings and recommendations extensively applied. In particular, comprehensive use must be made of the research findings in the field of child development upon which any standards for services to children and their day-by-day care must rest.

In addition to requesting the cooperation of our membership and of other national agencies, a representative committee of the League Board will be established to advise on the project. The Membership Committee of the League with its various panels will be relied upon heavily. Special committees will be set up consisting of experts in research, child welfare and other fields. Special emphasis will be placed on state welfare services in view of their licensing responsibility and its vital connection with the care and protection of children.

The work in each field will include development of basic memoranda by groups set up on regional and local bases, draft material drawn up by the Project Director and staff and reviewed by the various committees before it is revised for provisional action by the Board of Directors. Before final Board decision and publication, the material will be submitted to child welfare agencies and national agencies such as the U. S. Children's Bureau, Family Service Association of America, and national church groups, for their study and comment. Thus we shall have practical assurance that the resulting standards are authentically based and related to actual conditions. The Board of the League has committed itself to maintain current standards in the future.

On March 1, Zitha R. Turitz returned to the League as Director of the project. Mrs. Turitz brings to this undertaking unique experience in psychiatric and children's casework, and has served on the League staff on various assignments since 1940 when she prepared the final draft of "Standards for Organizations Providing Foster Family Care," published in 1941. Most recently she was Assistant to the Director, Division of Education, National Association for Mental Health, as consultant in the use and preparation of materials for mental health education. In 1954 she made an intensive four-month study of the League's Library Service.

The Standards Project should prove of inestimable value in improving the quality of care that is provided our nation's children.

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Student Aids

The Child Welfare League has just compiled a list of scholarships, fellowships and work-study plans offered by member agencies to students in open competition.* The information was gathered by a questionnaire which also yielded information on study opportunities offered to staff members. Believing that the entire picture of the methods for increasing the corps of trained personnel will be of interest to our readers, we are reporting on all information gathered from that study.

The questionnaire was sent to about 250 member and provisional agencies; 126 replied. Twenty-four were public agencies and 102 private. A total of 77 agencies, 23 public and 54 private, reported that they offer student aid to social workers on the job, or to newcomers.

The 23 public agencies have 26 different plans, 14 of which are educational leaves for workers already on the job. The 54 private agencies offer 63 plans for newcomers, and seven educational leaves for staff members. In all, 96 different plans were reported, 19 for staff members only.

The source of funds for these scholarships reveals the recognition that, as an infant industry, social work needs to be subsidized in order to increase the number of trained workers. 19 public agencies reported on the source of funds for student aids; 18 were paid for out of federal and/or state funds, and one out of local public funds. Fifty-one private agencies reported on source; 19 aids were budgeted specifically by chests, 24 through agency funds and eight through special grants. Only 29 student aids are offered on the basis of need, while sixty are offered on the basis of scholastic achievement or professional promise. This reflects the desperate need for trained workers, and the concern for stimulating professional training. Of the public agencies, 21 use professional promise or scholastic achievement as criteria, and six use need. Tenure and interest in program are the conditions for training opportunities for some agencies.

Understandably, some agencies have a religious requirement, some a geographic and some a residence requirement. These agen-

cies were eager to make sure that their awards would add personnel directly either to their locality, to their religious group, or to the agency. Five awards were offered in a specified school only. Six agencies grants were open to any bidder. Five agencies offered scholarships to first-year students only, 27 to either first- or second-year students, and 22 reserved them for second-year students. Only four awards require no service commitment upon completion of study. The others stated specifically the field in which the student should work, or a work period, ranging from one-half year to two years for each year of study.

Fourteen of the 126 agencies answering the questionnaire reported interest in offering study awards; eight of these are in the process of planning, the others cannot because of lack of funds.

An interesting development is the arrangement between some state departments of welfare that schools of social work refer to them for consideration for fellowships promising students who are residents of their state and who find themselves unable to finance a second year of study.

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* *Scholarship and Fellowship Plans, 1955-1956*, offered by Member and Provisional Agencies of the Child Welfare League of America, Inc., 7 pp. Price 10 cents.

A BOARD MEMBER SPEAKS

Supervision of Caseworkers in a Children's Agency

I WONDER if it is not a common fallacy among boards to concentrate on getting a good executive with the belief that when this is accomplished their worries are over. Even, as a matter of economy only, the board must face the fact that casework without supervision is costly. And if it expects its executive to supervise the caseworkers, it must be prepared for some sacrifice in the rewards of good agency administration, the fruitfulness of its program and the growth of its staff.

Actually an agency must stand or fall on the quality of its service. Thus the supervisor becomes a key member of the staff. Without underestimating the role of the administrator, it is the supervisor who helps to establish and maintain quality, who is able to attract and hold staff, who helps them to develop, helps them to be more productive, encourages competition among staff to improve service, and keeps them working together effectively.

Through good supervision emerges a co-ordinated policy; each caseworker relates her work with clients to the policy of the agency and the program of the agency as a whole; each caseworker produces to maximum capacity. The supervisor plays an important role in shaping the destiny of the agency; she constantly interprets the meaning of casework, its goal and its value. She frees the executive to administer the agency.

The supervisor offers the opportunity for planned growth of the staff and of the agency. She offers further experience from which the young worker may gain satisfactions in her work, and more stature in her professional career, and gives encouragement to the more experienced worker to continue to develop her skills.

Supervision is as essential for the most skilled workers as it is for the less experienced. Each needs to feel the satisfactions of steady growth each needs some help in maintaining a perspective. To accept the respon-

sibility of working with clients alone, without the degree of sharing and support offered by the supervisor, can, overwhelm even the most experienced worker. The caseworker can make her maximum contribution to an agency only when she has the stimulation and support of supervision. This offers the advantage not only of more than one worker examining the problems of clients, but it stimulates more effective solutions to problems and a more creative and dynamic program. The supervisor and worker together are able to view the problems of the client more objectively than the worker can alone. The worker may be acutely identified with the client, and the supervisor may be able to free her from too close identification.

The good supervisor encourages staff to develop their own techniques and ways of handling cases, providing always these are in terms of good casework practice and agency policy. Workers need supervision, with controlled freedom, to develop creatively.

The supervisor also utilizes the strengths of each caseworker for maximum effectiveness, and builds a strong program through judicious use of the skills of every member of her team—offsetting weakness in one area with strength in another.

It is significant that the skilled, experienced worker and the most promising of the younger workers prefer employment in an agency which offers casework supervision. The effectiveness of the agency giving casework without supervision, is therefore lowered since its ability to employ the more promising worker is lessened.

I see the supervisor as the liaison between board and staff with respect to practice. This does not imply a vertical structure, but rather a horizontal relationship. The supervisor, in cooperation with the executive, helps staff to participate in shaping agency policy, arranging contacts with the board so that board and staff can know and understand the roles of each.

The discrepancy in the ratio of skilled caseworkers to the jobs at hand places some responsibility for staff development on children's agencies. In this era of enlightened services to children the agency should act as an extension of the schools of social work to develop more skill in the worker who is to help the child and his family. It is true that children's agencies would be freer to function to greater capacity if there was not this need for ongoing training for younger workers, but realistically we must face the fact that with a growing emphasis in the schools on other fields, and the shortage of workers in the children's field it would seem to behoove the agencies to accept some share of the responsibility for in-service training. This is possible only in an agency which has adequate supervision of casework.

The agency's primary responsibility is to give a service which is meaningful and realistically helpful to its clients and to responsibly serve the community in which it functions. It cannot fulfill its responsibilities nor the requirements for sound administration when it provides no plan for the supervision of its workers.

This then implies (1) that the board must have a real conviction that its clients deserve adequate casework and (2) that it must find "the good executive," but further, must assume the responsibility for establishing personnel policies which will permit him to create a staff which includes skilled supervision to effect adequate casework.

MRS. CLARENCE A. CHICHESTER

Board Member, Child Welfare League of America, Inc.



REGIONAL CONFERENCE

Central Regional Conference

April 28, 29, 30

Hotel Cleveland, Cleveland, Ohio

Chairman: Mr. Leon H. Richman, Executive Director
Jewish Children's Bureau of Cleveland
Cleveland, Ohio

BOOK NOTE

Diagnostic Casework in the Thomistic Pattern,
Mary J. McCormick. Columbia University Press,
New York, 1954. 239 pp. \$3.50.

Doctor McCormick presents clearly the necessity of philosophy in professional life. She describes efforts within casework during the past generation

"to isolate and interpret the philosophical framework which its (casework's) leaders seem always to have recognized as essential. . . ."

With strength and clarity the author considers non-material elements in human personality, the goal of life, and the capacity for control within the person through exercise of a will which is free. Attention is given the importance of love in life, and of the emotions in behavior. The function of the virtue of prudence is explained, as is that of habits in general. Similarly the gift of counsel is described, and the concepts of motivation and responsibility are placed in focus.

Integrated with discussion of such topics are several examples drawn from casework practice. Most are presented briefly, as illustrations. Child welfare workers will note several illustrative examples pertaining to children.

The author understands philosophy as "the science which investigates the most general facts and principles. . . ." Thus it is concerned with ultimate principles and norms. It provides guidance in the search for methods and skills, and in their analysis. It directs their development and use. Required also is a source from which may be derived the necessary proximate details. For these one depends upon the persons familiar with method, and skilled through practice. These persons are found among the social workers quoted by Dr. McCormick, extending from Mary Richmond to writers of our present decade. The analysts cited range from Freud to Zilboorg.

My personal inclination tends toward the same casework orientation favored by Dr. McCormick. If the complete title of the book were *Diagnostic Casework*, a further discus-

sion of the selection of writers cited would not be necessary. However this book is not merely *Diagnostic Casework*, it is entitled *Diagnostic Casework in the Thomistic Pattern*. Further, the author states that the casework method of the Diagnostic Orientation can be adapted and aligned with Thomistic philosophy, thus producing a *third orientation of casework*. Because of this some may mistakenly read into the book more than the author intended.

A substantial part of the book reveals agreement between certain casework writings and the principles of St. Thomas Aquinas. These writings concern aspects of casework method in the Diagnostic Orientation. The selection is admirable for the actual scope of the book, and the author is to be commended for her choice. The book need not be misconstrued if one realizes that the body of the text says little concerning the Functional Orientation, and that Rank is considered in an appendix entitled "The Philosophical Basis of Functional Casework."

In the body of the text it is clear that Dr. McCormick disagrees explicitly with some of Freud's teaching. However one does not receive the impression that she is seeking out specific teachings of Freud to place them in opposition to the principles of St. Thomas. Regarding the discussion of Rank, one may be somewhat tempted to incline a bit toward the opposite impression.

Her work has advanced the cause of clear-thinking within casework immeasurably. We recommend a careful, studious reading to all who are unfamiliar with the "Thomistic Pattern"—the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas. One will learn, through Miss McCormick's help, the contribution he has for casework. To quote the author,

"this contribution consists in the philosopher's exposition of the nature of man, an exposition which portrays the human being in all his fullness; in his spiritual powers as well as in his physical capacities; in his social as well as his psychological dynamics; in his supernatural as well as natural life."

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